



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher
U.S. House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Fletcher:

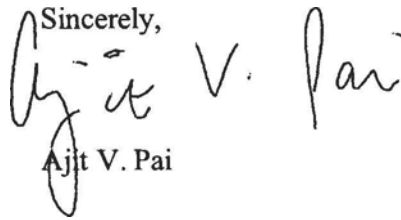
Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the 6 GHz spectrum band and for sharing your concerns about the need to protect communications technologies operated by oil and gas exploration companies in the Gulf of Mexico. While I agree with you that the FCC must protect these incumbent users from harmful interference, I also support the expansion of limited spectrum resources to benefit all Americans. Accordingly, I have circulated a draft Report and Order for consideration at the Commission's April 23, 2020 Open Meeting that would make 1,200 megahertz of spectrum available for unlicensed use in this band—effectively increasing the amount of spectrum available for Wi-Fi by nearly a factor of five. These rules would enhance nationwide access for a broad range of essential and life-saving communications activities—including telehealth, remote learning, and telework. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for additional unlicensed spectrum was clear and well documented—and now we see in stark relief the essential need for this type of connectivity.

The technical experts in the Commission's Office of Engineering and Technology have thoroughly reviewed the substantial record of this proceeding. The proposed rules represent the results of their comprehensive analysis. I am confident that we can move ahead expeditiously to adopt their recommendation authorizing two different types of unlicensed operations: standard-power in 850-megahertz of the band and indoor low-power operations over the full 1,200-megahertz available in the 6 GHz band. I am likewise convinced that the proposed automated frequency coordination system will prevent standard power access points from operating in a manner that could cause harmful interference to incumbent services, including in the Gulf of Mexico where RigNet operates.

The rules we propose to adopt will implement well-known and validated propagation models and specify that the local environment, such as transmissions over water, be accounted for in determining unlicensed device operating frequencies. This will ensure that circumstances particular to RigNet, and other operators within the Gulf of Mexico, will be addressed and that these entities are protected. Importantly, the Commission's proposed rules will bar the use of standard-power and low-power access points on oil platforms so that entities like RigNet would not experience a disruption of service. Exempting use of 6 GHz spectrum over the entire Gulf of Mexico, however, would deprive all users in the area, including many citizens and businesses within Texas, of the tremendous benefits that can be garnered by additional bandwidth for unlicensed use. I believe the balanced approach I've proposed would best serve all constituencies—incumbent users and Wi-Fi-reliant consumers alike.

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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai